

**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
Eastern District of Virginia*

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**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2002

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**Norfolk, Virginia** – Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Barry Johnson, age 26, of Virginia Beach, VA, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Raymond A. Jackson, to 108 months of imprisonment in conjunction with his attempt to rob SunTrust Bank on June 15, 2001.

Johnson previously pled guilty in August 2002 to making a telephonic bomb threat and to attempting to extort money from SunTrust Bank. At approximately 2:30 a.m. on the morning of June 15, 2001, Johnson placed a duffle bag near the night deposit box at a SunTrust Bank in Virginia Beach, VA. This bag contained a typed note, purportedly from a “friend of Usama Bin Laden,” with instructions for handling a bomb that had allegedly been placed on the roof of the bank. Shortly after 9:30 a.m., Johnson telephoned the branch manager at the bank and told her that there was a bomb on the roof and that she had eight minutes to comply with his demands, which included retrieving the duffle bag and filling it with cash. Johnson also stated that he knew the identity and home address of the branch manager’s mother and threatened to kidnap her if the branch manager failed to follow his instructions. In spite of these threats, the branch manager signaled another employee to call the Virginia Beach Police Department, which responded, foiled the robbery attempt, and determined that no bomb had been placed upon the premises. The perpetrator of the attempted robbery, however, was not caught at that time. Soon after the police responded, Johnson again called the branch manager and told her that they all would die for failing to comply with this demands.

After executing five search warrants in December 2001, the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested defendant Johnson. In January 2002 a federal grand jury in Newport News indicted Johnson on charges of extortion and making a telephonic bomb threat.

This matter was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Secret Service, and the Virginia Beach Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Robert J. Krask prosecuted the case.

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